

THE BANGKOK STATEMENT

A pledge to promote the protection of Children's Environmental Health

We Commit Ourselves:

To develop active and innovative national and international networks with our colleagues for the promotion and protection of children's environmental health in all areas, and especially in four critical areas:

1. PROTECTION AND PREVENTION - To strengthen existing programs and initiate new mechanisms to provide access for all children to clean water and air, adequate sanitation, safe food and appropriate. Reduce or eliminate environmental causes of asthma and respiratory diseases, including exposure to environmental tobacco smoke. Reduce or eliminate exposure to toxic metal such as lead, mercury and arsenic, to fluoride, and to hazardous anthropogenic chemicals such as toxic wastes, pesticides and persistent organic pollutants. Reduce or eliminate exposure to known and suspected anthropogenic carcinogens, neurotoxins, developmental and reproductive toxicants, immunotoxicants and naturally occurring toxins. Reduce the incidence of accidents, injuries and poisonings, as well as exposure to noise, radiations and other factors by improving the physical environments of children at home, in school and in all environments where children spend time.

1. HEALTH CARE AND RESEARCH - To promote the recognition, assessment and study of environmental factors that have an impact on the health and development of children:

Develop and implement cooperative multidisciplinary research studies, as well as disease surveillance and exposure monitoring in association with centers of excellence, and promote the collection of harmonized data and its dissemination.

Incorporate training on CEH for health care providers and other professionals, and promote the use of the environmental history. Seek financial and institutional support for research, data collection, education, intervention and prevention programs. Develop risk assessment methodologies that incorporate children as special groups.

1. EMPOWERMENT AND EDUCATION - To promote the education of children and parents-to-be about the importance of their physical environment and their participation in decisions that affect their lives, and to inform parents, teachers and caregivers and the community in general on the need and means to provide a safe, healthy and supportive environment to all children:

Provide environmental health education through healthy schools and adult education initiatives.

Incorporate in the school and high-school curricula lessons on health and the environment

Impart environmental health expertise to educators, curriculum designers and school administrators.

Create and disseminate culturally relevant information about the special vulnerability of children to environmental threats and practical steps to protect children.

Empower the community to identify toxic threats to children and to

work with local authorities in developing prevention and intervention programmes.

1. ADVOCACY - To advocate for the protection and promotion of CEH at all levels, including the political spheres, decision-makers and the communities:

Utilize lessons learned to prevent environmental illness in children, for example by promoting legislation for the removal of lead from all gasoline, paints and ceramics, and tobacco smoke-free environments in all public buildings.

Sensitize decision-makers about the results of research studies and observations of front-line workers that need to be accorded high priority to safeguard children's health.

Promote environmental health policies that protect children.

Raise the awareness of decision-makers and potential donors about known children's environmental health threats and work with them and other stakeholders to allocate necessary resources to implement interventions.

Work with the media to disseminate information on core CEH issues, locally relevant environmental health problems and possible solutions.

For all those concerned about the environmental health of children, the time to translate knowledge into action is now.

Bangkok, 7 March 2002